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PEACEFUL EMBODIMENT:
NOT MERELY TRANQUIL IN NATURE

by
Caitlin Elizabeth Mahon

A thesis submitted to the Department of Dance of The College at Brockport, State
University of New York, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Dance.

Submitted August 17, 2017

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By

Caitlin Elizabeth Mahon

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NOT MERELY TRANQUIL IN NATURE

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ABSTRACT

Choreography influences theoretical research and theoretical research influences choreography. In the past, bodies have served as vehicles for protest and have been equipped with training, plans, and choreographic tactics used to carry out movements aimed toward revolution. It is these bodies in space at a lunch counter, at a sit-in, at a march, and on a street which possess the ability to influence a revolt just as the body on a proscenium stage can influence a visceral reaction from the audience members toward taking action. My research as a choreographer is directly influenced by my interest in demonstrations and protests, from the past to the present, and how they are in fact an extension of dance through their own use of choreography. My objective as a choreographer is to present how more traditional forms of dance choreography can be an extension of protest. In the piece of choreography *Buckworld One*, choreographer Carrie Mikuls, takes the dance form of krumping to the concert stage. Dr. Megan Ann Todd, Independent Scholar and adjunct professor of Dance at Mesa Community College in Mesa, Arizona, states this about the work,

These moments in performance are exactly how and why art and performance can and do change lives. They bring the audience into presence, into the present... These moments in performance act as a catalyst for social justice inciting visceral and emotional responses, critical thought, discussion and a deep sense of accountability that begins in the space of the theatre and reaches beyond.ⁱ

Dr. Todd's words succinctly encapsulate the impetus of what motivates me to create choreography. Whether an audience member understands all of the crafted nuances or

not, of the dance work being witnessed, seeing bodies dance can cause a visceral reaction to make audience members move.

KEYWORDS: civil rights; choreography; concert dance; krumping; marching; peaceful embodiment; protest; sitting; standing

INTRODUCTION

On October 12, 2011, TIME magazine published an online feature article, during the second month of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) Movement, reflecting on what they deemed to be the *Top 10 American Protest Movements* which had occurred, up to that point, in United States history. While reading these succinct synopses, readers are taken back in time to the Boston Tea Party, the Women's Suffrage Movement, the Labor Movement with the Knights of Labor, the Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, the Gay Rights Movements, the Anti-Globalization Movement, and beyond.ⁱⁱ In TIME's condensed accounts of these protest movements; one has to wonder what motivated the participants to use their bodies to occupy space in a way which demonstrated their protest through their movement or motionlessness? How exactly were these bodies organized in a semblance of unison to effectively demonstrate their dissent? Also would the same mode of peaceful protest that worked for the Boston Tea Party work for the Civil Rights Movement? Or the modes for Women's Suffrage work for the Labor Movement? Probably not, due to the fact that these movements occurred during completely different time periods with different people and arguably with different social constructs in place. Many would even argue that the Boston Tea Party was not peaceful at all. Something that does ring true from reading this Time magazine collection is that the choreographies of protest have not remained stagnant. Therefore,

what is the choreography of protest and how has it changed over time? How does it manifest itself in concert dance and in the world at large?

American History curriculums, in elementary schools, teach movements of protest, such as the previously mentioned Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Suffrage movement as having been peaceful as well as being defined as acts of civil disobedience. Students are taught that these actions were spontaneous and brought to the forefront by extremely brave people such as, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. These historical acts were described as being unplanned as if the participants awoke one morning and decided to take action as the event unfolded. Not until much later did it become evident that all of these movements were clearly calculated, codified, and choreographed as modes of peaceful protest, or embodiment, and that they could take on different forms opposing violence.

Violence holds much relevance in our world both in the past and present. However, what can violence be defined as? What are the parameters of such acts? What is the motivation behind peaceful embodiment versus the motivation behind embodying violence? Sometimes peaceful practices can even be misconstrued as being violent themselves. What can non-violence be defined as in terms of scholarly sources on the bodily level? Can embodying peace be bombastic and explosive or is it merely limited to a calm serene nature? Human beings genetically are not engineered to endure violence (no natural armor, fangs, claws etc.) but what is it about human nature that perpetuates violence? Choreographically—on the streets and the stage— what

reaction can result from witnessing groups of unison bodies in space, and which tactics — as a choreographer—can be utilized to bring about a greater impact or reaction?

If the *Time* magazine anthology of protests has shown anything, it has shown that human beings have the means to occupy space with their bodies and through their bodily actions they have the ability to portray their beliefs and by doing so actively make choices which can literally move society towards a better future. Time and time again human beings have shown their resilience through such actions. Once again the United States of America, and even the world at large, finds itself in a state of turmoil having to face the depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation on various levels, racism, the threat of nuclear war, and the leaders of the world being at odds with one another resulting in steadfast alliances breaking apart. All of these and more make up the volatility and chaos that present day society faces.

The Science and Security board warned, “The probability of global catastrophe is very high, and the actions needed to reduce the risks of disaster must be taken very soon”ⁱⁱⁱ. Our present state of the world continues to be worrisome, from what we hear and see with our own ears and eyes to the minutia that floods our social media feeds to a point of over stimulation. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists—an organization that informs the public about threats to the survival of humanity, from nuclear weapons to climate change^{iv}—recently stated that it is two and a half minutes until midnight on the Doomsday Clock. The Doomsday Clock is a symbol representing the likelihood of a global catastrophe. It originated in 1947 being seven minutes to midnight, or “seven

minutes” until doomsday. This two and a half minute marker is the closest it has been to midnight since the 1980s.^v It is worth it to try to better our planet and to try to better our human relations and interactions. This can be accomplished by choreographing a collection of bodies to portray through its movement the message or protest to an action or inaction. A spectrum of peaceful embodiment is a productive means by which to approach this. Everyone has a body and bodies have the power to make meaning and that meaning has the power to make change.

The first amendment to The United States’ Bill of Rights speaks of citizens’ rights to peaceably assemble. In Amendment I of the United States Constitution, it specifically states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Our nation has witnessed such peaceful protest in a variety of movements big and small, such as the one’s TIME magazine touched upon, specifically, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Suffrage Movement. Even though to “peaceably assemble” is a lawful right that we have in this country, the Bill of Rights never directly spelled out the definition or the parameters of how to acceptably do so. Much like many of the aspects of our Constitution, our country's forefathers chose such syntax purposefully to incorporate flexibility for the future.

The notion that peaceful protest is embodied in one manner continues to perpetuate itself; therefore, Mahatma Gandhi in India and Rosa Parks in the United

States manifested peace in the synonymous serene calm approach that is deemed peaceful and acceptable in our country. Although, with our changing times and “As James Farmer has pointed out, we are in our infancy in nonviolent action. In the course of the revolution [of the Civil Rights Movement] we may grow to maturity.”^{vi} “We have only to consider the SB1070, legislation, recently passed, among many more examples to apprehend why modes of advocacy for social justice are important.”^{vii} We have grown to witness that serenity and “aesthetic of the cool” is not the only quality peaceful embodiment can employ. Peaceful embodiment offers a qualitative spectrum with definite guidelines that counter parameters of violence, but not limited to one mode of performance. Peaceful embodiment can be serene, tranquil and quiet; however equally so, peaceful embodiment can be bombastic, explosive, rigorous, and loud.

1

MOTIVATION

‘OKAY...NOW LET’S GET IN FORMATION’

What exactly is it that motivates us? Is it an event that directly affects others? Is it an event that directly affects us? Is it an image seen or words read? The answer is all of these different impetuses can affect a person and motivate them. “The concept of motivation has taken on a significant role in current psychological and cultural thinking. *“Motivation is the active, integrated, and directed behaviors of the organism. The motivational concept is used to account for these behaviors in terms of (1) the energies expended in such activity and (2) the internal and external factors that determine the direction of such behaviors.”*^{viii} Understanding what motivates or causes a spark to ignite under the audience or group of citizens in order to inspire them to dig deeper into the issue at hand is crucial to the delivery and acceptance of a message. This knowledge can help to fuel the fire pushing people toward a discussion of the issue or injustice at hand.

In November of 2017, Donald Trump was elected the 45th President of The United States of America. This moment was one of those catalysts stated above which motivated citizens of America to start stirring in various ways. The societal groups who were at both ends of the spectrum were quite evident. It was easy to identify those who were for and against the stunning outcome of this election through their separate and distinct actions of peaceful embodiment. The social media feeds exploded with

everything from what Trump was tweeting to the stunned reaction of many U.S. citizens as to how a reality star could have possibly become our 45th president. While some U.S. citizens equally passionate expressed themselves through cheers of white supremacy, there were many others who opposed thus sparking the Women's March, the Climate March, Die-Ins, and more protests. The Womens' Marches of 2017 were reminiscent of the marches during the Civil Rights Movement. On January 21, 2017 the largest single protest in U.S. history took place in Washington D.C. and other major U.S. cities. Most rallies were in protest of the newly inaugurated Donald Trump and his policies, expressed during his campaign, concerning women's rights, immigration reform, healthcare reform, LGBTQ rights, racial equality, and workers' rights.^{ix} The extreme views and campaign promises of the newly elected president served as the catalyst which motivated these citizens to demonstrate. They used their millions of marching bodies as their vehicles of peaceful embodiment, but what was different about January 21, 2017? How was it able to become the largest protest in American History? One main factor: the internet.

In 2014, Francesca Polletta wrote the article *Participatory Democracy's Movments*. This article's focus is how participation in protest, during the five years prior to 2014, evolved due to the use of the internet, "If there are two things that unite the stunningly diverse movements of the last five years, it is their reliance on new digital media and their determination to enact, as well as bring about, more participatory forms of democracy."^x

This article is exemplified as it relates to an internet “hashtag” that was created in 2013 #blacklivesmatter. Alicia Garza, now famously known as one of the founders of the Black Lives Matter Movement, was in a bar in Oakland California during July of 2013 waiting for the verdict of the trial of George Zimmerman. Zimmerman had been a neighborhood watch volunteer in Sanford, Florida who shot 17 year-old Trayvon Martin, in February of 2012. This particular case hit closer to home for Garza due to the fact that Martin possessed a similar stature to her younger brother. The jury deliberated for 16 hours. For the charges of second degree murder and manslaughter, Zimmerman was declared not guilty.^{xi}

In response Garza posted this to Facebook, “Black people. I love you. I love us. Our lives matter.”^{xii} Patrisse Cullors, a friend of Garza, read her post. As a community organizer and prison reformer she broadcasted this message, to her friends and created #blacklivesmatter.^{xiii} From there Black Lives Matter was born; however, it was still just a spark. It was a thriving hashtag on the internet that would continue to spread, but something else would have to catalyze bodies to occupy space. On August 9, 2014 actions taken did.

In Ferguson, Missouri Michael Brown was shot and killed on that day in 2014 by police officer Darren Wilson.^{xiv} The public outcry resulting from this one shot was reminiscent of the bullet that started World War I. One shot can catalyze an outbreak of events. Just as the bullet that killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914 served as the catalyst that started the Great War, the bullet that killed Michael Brown served as a catalyst for civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri.^{xv} The discovery of Brown’s

death was just the motivation needed for bodies to occupy space. Protests erupted in the area for weeks.^{xvi} Once this event occurred more than 500 people joined Black Lives Matter from 18 cities in America.^{xvii} Black Lives Matter presently has over 26 chapters across the United States.^{xviii} From one shot bullet to one posted message actions can influence society to move, “From one heartfelt Facebook post, it has spawned a new civil rights movement.”^{xix}

A notable difference in the Black Lives Matter Movement is that there are no concrete leaders, “no Martin Luther King. or Malcom X”. There is no single charismatic voice that claims to speak for many.”^{xx} Some believe that at this point in America’s history this dynamic could give strength to a movement. Garza pointed out that single leaders, of the past, were practically always killed and/or always male.^{xxi} Garza states, “We have a lot of leaders [in this organization],” insists Garza, “just not where you might be looking for them. If you’re only looking for the straight black man who is a preacher, you’re not going to find it.”^{xxii} Her statement is personified in Garza identifying herself as queer and her husband as transgender, not the straight males of the past. We live in an age where women and LGBTQ individuals are no longer in the shadows, but in the forefront.

Francesca Polletta reiterates the new wave of societal movements referenced by the Black Lives Matter Movement when she states,

Practitioners of direct action have long argued that you cannot expect people to put their bodies on the line if you do not involve them in the decision to do so. Global justice activists argue that when authority is diffuse, police have a

harder time shutting down demonstrations by arresting a leader. But critics point out that police can also use the absence of a clearly defined leader as an excuse to refuse to negotiate with the group. Most activists would agree that soliciting broad input from a group helps identify tactical opportunities and creative solutions that might otherwise be missed.^{xxiii}

This further supports Garza's ideology of not resting the burden and not resting the voice of Black Lives Matters on one individual as a wise choice. Alicia Garza's story demonstrates that, "...the rise of the Internet has not only made protests easier to organize, it has also produced a new understanding of equality, organization, and democracy"^{xxiv} and not to mention given birth to the movement she is so passionate about. Black Lives Matter is breaking barriers on various fronts, from revealing that our society is not as equal as we had complacently settled into believing to dismantling certain norms in organizations on a grassroots level. The internet is the vehicle of getting its message out to the largest audience.

February 6, 2016 Beyoncé's song and video "Formation" was released. The word "formation" in itself implies, according to the Oxford dictionary, *a group of people or things in a particular arrangement or pattern*. The word alone is reminiscent of how bodies are arranged in depicting acts of protest. Protest brings a sense of unity and unison to the movements of the body. Beyoncé's video proceeds to demonstrate this particularly well in its section comprised of a large group of African American women dancing in an empty swimming pool. They are positioned in a straight line performing unison movement wearing clothes that are of the same color schemes of grey and burgundy, but not uniform, or identical, in nature. Also these dancers, in the video, stand together in stillness, utilizing tactics of cannon –having

one dancer start a sequence of dance movements then the next starts four counts after— as well as call and response. In addition to the clear use of the above mentioned choreographic tactics, used to portray a sense of unity and protest, “Her single “Formation” touches on feminism, oppression, sexuality, and police brutality, and her video offers a visual representation for the overall theme of African American cultural ownership. It is of course, an essential message for contemporary discussion, and the formerly-silenced subject is beginning to achieve prevalence in the music industry...”^{xxv}

A particular image that stands out, providing discomfort in the video, is that of a young African American boy dancing in the streets at night with a hooded sweatshirt on. Across from him there is a line of police officers pointing their guns at him. These officers seem more like a firing squad than patrol officers. His arms go up in a “don’t shoot” plea and in a call and response fashion all of theirs do as well. Some argue that images like this portray Beyoncé as being anti-police. To such comments in an exclusive ELLE magazine UK interview she responded,

Anyone who perceives my message as anti-police is completely mistaken. I have so much admiration and respect for officers and the families of officers who sacrifice themselves to keep us safe. But let’s be clear I am against police brutality and injustice. There are two separate things.^{xxvi}

Beyoncé continues to state,

I’m proud of what we created and I’m proud to be part of a conversation that is pushing things forward in a positive way.^{xxvii}

When society is in the midst of stirring then gaining more and more momentum, people, pop culture, and the media start to stir as well, but it’s important to remember that duration plays a major role in who latches on and who remains involved.

While interning in Washington D.C.—at the non-governmental organization (NGO) World Wildlife Fund—during the fall of 2013, I experienced the United States government shutdown from October 1 to October 16. I was still able to attend my internship due to the fact that I was working at an N.G.O.. Some of my classmates were restricted from interning during this time. Throughout this historic event, I continued to commute into work every day unlike the majority of people living in D.C. at the time. Each work day, I rode on the empty Metro, then I walked from the orange line, of the Metro, through Dupont Circle, up 24th Street - then I walked four blocks from the White House to W.W.F. Headquarters. As I walked, I found myself in the streets of America's capital with an immense curiosity concerning the outcome of the government shutdown.

I imagined that I would find people overflowing the streets demonstrating in peaceful protest, due to the harm our government shutdown was creating by keeping so many of its citizens out of work and putting a halt to our nation's budget; I was mistaken. What I encountered instead was a ghost town. I was stunned then angry and found myself in a disenchanted stream of consciousness thinking 'are people today seriously so self-consumed with social media and their smart phones that they are too preoccupied to occupy space moving in protest in an effort to demonstrate that the government should do what is best for the constituents of this nation? What about "We the People..?"' This pondering while walking in the abandoned bones of our nation's capital— comprised of vacant monuments, museums, and buildings— prompted my mind to drift to the Civil Rights Movement and the tactics which were performed to

promote change. What was missing in the fall of 2013? Was it a lack of motivation, compassion or was it a lack of organization?

Organized freedom rides, sit-ins, and marches, were among the codified and calculated protests which were incited by CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) during the Civil Rights Movement. They were strategically organized in order to come up with the most effective codified calculated movements, in terms of having a system of training implemented. In 2013, I was stunned by the lack of bodily protest; however, more recently the streets of major cities, like Washington D.C., are hardly ghost towns. People are mobilizing for what they believe in, for example in response to President Trump's election and to Presidents Trump's actions thus far in office.

Reflecting in hindsight, I realize that at the time of the government shutdown of 2013, people were consumed with self-indulgence. I was outraged over the injustice that our government was impeding on its citizens by putting thousands of people out of work, having our capitol shutdown, making our country more susceptible to foreign attack, and wondering if it would ever be resolved. I now understand that in order to organize even for the most disenfranchised of groups there has to be catalysts in play over a long period of time before a large enough group of people decide to mobilize. The short duration, of less than a month, of the government shutdown did not qualify as a catalyst for a large organized protest. The information on longer duration and increasing incidences from the Black Lives Matter case study demonstrates a strong correlation to the rate and success of current day organization.

The road toward revolution takes an abundance of motivation. The internet has played a major role in America as an effective method of organization, but it's important to remember that, "For contemporary activists, then, the challenge is to create the habits of citizen input that will endure even after the blush has worn off the new technologies of participation."^{xxviii} Currently, the United States of America is experiencing an extremely volatile period and if the catalysts, particularly the use of the internet and social media, which are currently motivating the civil actions lose their effectiveness, there will need to be other methods in their place to continue the causes.

Revolution always invites an active body; however, the active body does not always have to be embodied in a peaceful manner. Plenty of revolutions have been led by reformers, freedom fighters, and rioters acting in ways that spill others' blood as well as performing other means of violence; however, an abundance of social and political change has occurred through nonviolent actions as well. So then what are the specific characteristics of a body embodying peace?

2

DEFINING NONVIOLENCE

On December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks remained seated on a Montgomery bus refusing to sacrifice it to a Caucasian male keeping her cool remaining calm in a high stress situation. Both of these peaceful actions were met with an opposing action of violence. In both instances, the protestors had intent and knew that their peaceful actions would incite the opposition of peace. The incited violence thus providing the reaction they hoped would draw attention and public outrage to their cause.

Throughout human history, there has been a deluge of violence and gallons upon gallons of bloodshed, but are human beings anatomically built to be violent? Emotions and revenge seem to be in the driver's seat as illogical motivators of such action, but human beings tend to have clouded judgment finding justice synonymous with revenge. In the 2015 The Walking Dead episode "*Here's Not Here*", a character named Eastman states this to the character Morgan: "We're not built to kill. We don't have claws fangs or armor. Vets [Veterans], they came back with PTSD, that didn't happen because we're comfortable with killing. We're not. We can't be. We feel. We're connected."^{xxix} Even though this is a fictional television show, it raises an obvious and yet profound point stressing the fact that human beings are not psychologically prepared for violence.

In the wild, flora and fauna have specific physical features and traits that aid them in living in their environment with their surrounding organisms. For example, the

candelabra cactus, in the deserts of North America, has a coarse outer layer along with sharp spines to keep its predators away and to preserve its internal water supply.^{xxx} Armadillos are the only mammals that have armor to protect themselves from the claws and fangs of their predators.^{xxxi} As human beings we do not possess such armor, unless it is armor that we have made or purchased. Human beings were not created to inhabit environments of violence. We are not knife or bullet resistant, we do not have a hard exterior shell, we merely have a soft epidermis encasing and protecting our organs. Additionally, we do not have pronounced canines or large sharp talons to ward off or fight our enemies; therefore, we are not made for combat and when we do make the choice to act in a violent manner it can rapidly/immediately lead to casualties and fatalities. When taking all of these elements into account, modes of peaceful protest and forms of nonviolence seem to be the most conducive means to mobilize change while sustaining human life; however, the question of ‘what exactly does nonviolence even mean?’ remains.

It is extremely difficult to come up with a concrete definition of nonviolence, or to possess the guidelines of what embodying nonviolence means or looks like, due to the complexity of the myriad of variables such as: the context, to whom, what is the baseline, and when said act occurred. Therefore, seeking out clearer definitions of what violence means is the next step. Johan Galtung—a Norwegian sociologist, mathematician, and the principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies—broke up the definition of violence into four categories as being:

1. Violence as biological incapacitation
2. Violence as reduction of action-space
3. Violence as a negative influence approach
4. Violence as influence^{xxxii}

I would argue that these four categories of violence are the counterparts to the definition of peaceful embodiment.

To further Galtung's descriptions he states, "1. *Violence as biological incapacitation*. This concept of violence is probably the most widely used, even though it is often qualified by such conditions as 'direct' and 'intended'. The concept is linked to the idea of health: violence is a deliberate health-reduction. 2. *Violence as a reduction of action space*. The concept of violence would also include such techniques as physical constraint and brainwashing since they both imply a reduction of action-space...so that he [or she] no longer has any choice."^{xxxiii} Impeding on a person's space to act in peaceful embodiment, or otherwise, is an act of violence. One loses their ability to make their own choices as well as the ability to change the direction of their life when their own action space is removed and/or impeded upon. This is one of the reasons why in my choreography I never had my dancers perform partnering or touch. I never wanted there to be a misinterpretation that someone's action space was being impeded upon by another body. With that said how can peaceful embodiment manifest?

SITTING

The study of political science is often the forum for analyzing social movements which have resulted in revolution throughout American history. For instance, the book The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975, begins with the discussion of various social movements which took place during that time period for collective change in the politics, the government, and the societal practices of the United States of America.^{xxxiv}

While studying American History in elementary school, such movements, including the Civil Rights Movement are taught. These actions that were learned were presented in a manner making historical icons seem as if their actions were spontaneous, random, and unplanned. Until entering higher education does one realize that all of these movements were clearly calculated and arguably choreographed, as previously discussed with CORE.^{xxxv} Rosa Parks was a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) activist in Montgomery Alabama. As a young student, there is a belief that one day, on a whim, this incredible woman simply could not take being treated as a disenfranchised human being any longer therefore she decided not to give up her seat to a white male. How Parks is portrayed in elementary schools however is misguided because this act was clearly calculated by the NAACP even though surely Parks' feelings of being fed-up were very real. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks made history through her site specific dance of staying in her seat, not sacrificing it to a white male, keeping her cool and remaining calm in a highly

stressful situation. If she had performed such an embodiment in a different location, the meaning would have been lost and her intent would have completely dissipated.^{xxxvi}

Site specific dances are creative works comprised of a series of movements, or postures—such as how one sits—made for a particular site as opposed to a typical theatre or stage. Additionally, other criteria for site specific dance works dictate that they are dependent on the location. It could not occur and have the same impact on another site or location.^{xxxvii} The site of such work is interdependent to the site in which it is performed. Rosa Parks' act, as part of the Civil Rights Movement, could have lost some of its intentionality and meaning if she performed this particular embodiment of sitting in another location. She was making a clear statement about the injustices of the bus lines at the time. If she were to sit at a lunch counter yet want to protest the injustice of the bus lines her message would have been lost. Site specific locations, such as in this case, tend to have higher stakes. For example Parks maintaining her performance by remaining seated even when she was forcefully asked to move and eventually arrested for not moving.^{xxxviii} The other players such as the bus driver and the white male were all a part of the dance whether they knew it or not. All of these components played key roles in creating the scene. This calculated and choreographed movement by Rosa Parks, as an NAACP ensemble member, was the catalyst which lit the fire under the Civil Rights Movement.

Individuals who do not study dance may be confused regarding how the act of sitting in a cushioned bus seat could be considered a dance, a performance, or a

specifically choreographed embodiment; however, it is important for the general public to realize that stillness is frequently used in dance and at times can be more powerful and meaningful than vigorous movement. This tends to be due to how said stillness is embodied. Also dance is not just about “the moves”, but about how one performs them. Similar to actors, that is where the intentionality and specific attention to action comes into play; therefore, the clarity of intentionality and the “how” of performing a movement or posture dictates how an action is perceived.

The term “movement” or “movements” according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary means: “the act or process of moves; especially: change of place or position or posture” and “a series of organized activities working toward an objective; also: an organized effort to promote or attain an end.” These definitions are quite synonymous with dance. Dance can be choreographed as a series of movements. Said series of movements can be strung together to create a longer movement-phrase; which can change place in space and in the position of the body. Also dance can be task based utilizing objectives to be attained through the body or objectives for the body in order to convey a greater meaning or simply to spark the audience's thoughts.

Susan Leigh Foster, a choreographer, dancer, scholar, and Professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA, stated,

When individuals choose to participate in these kinds of political demonstrations they commit themselves to physical action, whatever form it takes. Whether they become the reflexive body sitting at the lunch counter, the campy body lying on Wall Street, or the glocal body blockading Downtown Seattle, they choose to spend their day constructing [choreographing] physical interference, and this engagement with the physical imbues them with a deepened sense of personal agency. ... the process of creating political

interference calls forth a perceptive and responsive physicality that, everywhere along the way, deciphers the social and then choreographs an imagine alternative. As they fathom injustice, organize to protest, craft a tactic, and engage in action these bodies read what is happening and articulate their imaginative rebuttal. In so doing they demonstrate to themselves and all those watching that something can be done. Could this be why they are called political “movements”?^{xxxix}

Foster acknowledges that there is a broadened definition of dance due to the codified tactics to employ movements and how embodiment is a part of our everyday lives from the concert stage to the public spaces of everyday life whether we realize it or not. What makes these actions even more intriguing is the reality of what we have seen occur and what can occur in the future when types of embodiment in past and present are choreographed movements for social change and how powerful that can be.

Rosa Parks, as Barbara Browning would classify it, was practicing nonviolent noncooperation.^{xl} She was occupying space on the bus that she was allowed to and had every right to occupy—until the bus got too full and she was asked to sacrifice her seat to a white male—she was not impeding on anyone else’s action space. She still was not impeding on anyone’s action space when the bus driver asked her to move out of her seat, that she had paid the same fare for as everyone else. Before Rosa Parks died in 2005 Scholastic, the book publishing company, did an interview with her:

Scholastic: What made you decide on December 1, 1955, not to get up from your seat?

Rosa Parks: I did not sit at the very front of the bus; I took a seat with a man who was next to the window – the first seat that was allowed for "colored" people to sit in. We were not disturbed until we reached the third stop after I boarded the bus. At this point a few white people boarded the bus, and one

white man was left standing. When the driver noticed him standing, he spoke to us (the man and two women across the aisle) and told us to let the man have the seat. The other three all stood up. But the driver saw me still sitting there. He said would I stand up, and I said, "No, I will not." Then he said, "I'll have you arrested." And I told him he could do that. So he didn't move the bus any further. Several black people left the bus.

Two policemen got on the bus in a couple of minutes. The driver told the police that I would not stand up. The policeman walked down and asked me why I didn't stand up, and I said I didn't think I should stand up. "Why do you push us around?" I asked him. And he said, "I don't know. But the law is the law and you are under arrest." As soon as he said that I stood up, the three of us left the bus together.^{xli}

A common turn of phrase is "keeping your cool" which can have a myriad of connotations, but in the context of Eighteenth-Century European standards Parks embodied an "aesthetic of cool". In the interview Parks depicts herself as responsive and calm, even though she was not compliant. In the eighteenth century, "A measure of breeding and refinement, [was demonstrated through] the good manners of the elite were termed "complaisance" from the late seventeenth century to the revolutionary period in France and England."^{xlii} This term "complaisance" is more commonly known today as "cool". Parks even though disobedient did not aggressively resist, she calmly remained in place seated not getting overly passionate, or emotional. She did not show any of the inner rumblings exploding within her. All she did was tell the bus driver that she would not leave her seat. In Europe during the eighteenth century such actions would be deemed as, "Heroic self-control and a disdain for revealing inner feelings were praise-worthy and upheld as behavior both noble and virtuous."^{xliii} Similar actions occurred decades later, but instead of remaining seated one person decided to take a stand against the injustices imposed upon their entire country.

STANDING

As bipeds, or two footed organisms, human beings frequently stand. When babies graduate from crawling to standing, it is perceived as a large accomplishment. It is a physical sign of human beings evolving, maturing, and growing into a more sophisticated form. We then carry on most of our lives in this up-right position. With that said when does standing transform from a seemingly mundane daily activity to an action that possesses more power and meaning? When one, or many, commit to particular directives, choreography, or embodiment of how to stand that is what can change the game and meaning of an action that human beings constantly perform. In the year of 2013, the Turkish people were not supported in the right of peaceably assembling as the first amendment supports Americans in such actions. Entering into their third week of protest against the Turkish government, the Turkish police force started dismantling the tent city that was created by protestors, resulting in an equal and opposite effect of dismantling the protest.^{xliv} The protestors at this point felt as if there was no hope left in fighting for their rights when an image of one lone man appeared standing.

Literally deciding to take a stand against the Turkish government, this one lone man stands for eight hours straight. For those eight hours, Erdem Gunduz stood still in Taksim Square regardless of the harassment that came his way while inspiring more and more people to join him in performing the same action. This passive, or tranquil, form of protest inspired activists in Turkey—and more widespread involvement around the world—to take a stand right along with Gunduz went viral on the social

media airways. The reactions to Gunduz's action demonstrated how the act of standing can embody a grander meaning of its own.^{xlv}

Gunduz's act served as the embodiment of peaceful protest. His actions served as a great motivator for its use in drawing attention to the injustices facing the Turkish people, but he could not have taken a stand in the way he did without his own impulse and motivation, "The concept of motivation has taken on a significant role in current psychological and cultural thinking. *"Motivation is the active, integrated, and directed behaviors of the organism. The motivational concept is used to account for these behaviors in terms of (1) the energies expended in such activity and (2) the internal and external factors that determine the direction of such behaviors."*^{xlvi}

At the 2014 Oslo Freedom Forum, Erdem Gunduz delivered a speech about his experience of standing for eight hours in Turkey. During this speech he stated,

I am a dancer and free-lance choreographer. People know me as the standing man... in 2013 the Turkish government issued a ban on demonstrations, on taxes, in the city of Istanbul, and in that moment for eight hours I stood silently.. Today in Turkey, the government is systematically demolishing human rights and freedom of expression everyday... all forms of communication are controlled...As standing man, I became what people describe as a symbol for equality and freedom but in the beginning my concept was not to deliver a performance... although I am a dancer, performer, and choreographer. My concern is what you can say with only the body. Sometimes the attitude of the body may be more meaningful than the attitude of language.^{xlvii}

By observing Gunduz's demonstration, performance, or serene activism, he was able to mobilize a plethora of people to join him in standing still banding together

against an infringement of human rights without the use of words or any markers from Galtung's definition of violence.

Due to his sensibility, as a dancer, while watching him embody the act of standing his body, in Laban Movement Analysis terms, was pin like with a horizon focus¹ looking out as if he were looking toward a better future with no person or persons able to break his focus or disrupt the integrity of his stance.^[xiii] It made sense to find out that Gunduz was a choreographer and dancer through listening to his speech at the 2014 Oslo Freedom Forum, due to the specificity in his embodiment and intentionality during his standing performance. His horizon focus and his grounded body through his weighted center demonstrated the specificity of which his trained body was capable. This specificity of intentionality aided him in being able to choreograph what he wanted to convey through standing when he deemed words inadequate. Gunduz found a serene inroad to embodying peace; however, that is not the only way peaceful embodiment can be accomplished.

MARCHING

A restaging, so to speak, occurred commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery march led by President Barrack Obama, on March 7, 2015. In terms of restaging and the reconstruction of movement practices Linda Caruso Haviland Associate Professor at Bryn Mawr College and the founder and Director of

¹ Having a horizon focus be when your chin is parallel to the floor and your eyes look miles away where the potential horizon line of the sunset would be.

the Dance Program stated, “There are reasons to reconstruct or restage a work or even from the near or distant past. There is the practical issue of maintaining repertory. There is the larger issue of continuing to make available works that still have a profound effect on us.”^{xlvi} In our society, we see value in preserving the past— we have thousands of museums to prove this. The restaging, of this particular march, is of importance to American life today as our nation finds itself once again in the midst of racial protests coupled with the explosion of violence and racial issues during the past few of years. Restaging this constructed work is important for contemporary Americans to witness. Through the process of restaging, this march provides Americans with the opportunity to reflect on what the people of the past had sacrificed. It gives Americans time to think about whether or not those sacrifices paid off and to question whether residual effects contribute to what we are dealing with in the present. Are these recent events testimony to the fact that we have more work to do, when it comes to race relations? Even though life among races is much better than it was during the time of the Civil Rights Movement, stigmas and prejudices still consume the minds of many, on both sides of the issue, separating the citizens of the United States of America.



Figure 1. Martin Luther King Jr. called Bloody Sunday “the greatest confrontation so far in the South.”^{xlix}



Figure 2. Restaging of the Selma to Montgomery march led by President Barack Obama. Some of those with the president are original cast members who had been beaten by police on the bridge in 1965 on Bloody Sunday.¹

This restaging of the historical choreographed march, from Selma to Montgomery, commemorated an event that went down in infamy as Bloody Sunday. On Bloody Sunday, police officers beat and used tear gas on the peaceful protestors who were moving together to generate change. In the article published by BBC News entitled “Obama praises Selma 'heroes' 50 years after march” Obama stated, “This nation’s long racial history still casts its long shadow upon us. We know the march is not yet over, the race is not yet won”.^{li} This article praises President Obama for the restaging of the structured movement that occurred 50 years ago. What was deemed specifically important, from the excerpt of the choreographed march, occurred when African Americans and supporters walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge— the location where most of the violence occurred on Bloody Sunday. The crossing of this boundary over this specific bridge sparked much discomfort and aggression 50 years ago. Thousands of people participating in this restaging along with many of the original cast members, who had been beaten on that very same bridge 50 years ago in 1965, made this restaging a culmination of past and present. Recent atrocities pertaining to the murders of civilians and police officers during present day events parallel those of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960’s, and give even more validity to the reconstruction of this choreographed movement.^{lii} The flame has been ignited presenting the turmoil between people and action needs to be taken before wildfire occurs.



Figure 3. Restaging of the Civil Rights march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge. ^{liii}

The New York Times article, “Obama, at Selma Memorial, Says, ‘We Know the March Is Not Yet Over’” praises the restaging of the movement from Selma to Montgomery encompassing it with the various civil rights movements in the United States of America in the 1960’s, “As a new generation struggles over race and power in America, President Obama and a host of political figures, from both [political] parties, came here on Saturday, to the site of one of the most searing days of the civil rights era, to reflect on how far the country has come and how far it still has to go.”^{liv} Looking positively at the movement of walking across the bridge where so many demonstrators risked their lives strategically sped up momentum to the passing of the Voting Rights Act. Thus proving how the moving body can be a catalyst for change.^{lv}

This physical act pushed President Lyndon B. Johnson to strive for change prompting him to demand that the Voting Rights Act, “remove[] all barriers

preventing African-Americans from registering as voters.”^{lvi} One can deduce that this dance also served as a catalyst for the recent *New York Times*’ emphasis on President Obama’s quotation, and that the choreographed and calculated movements across this bridge has held immense importance in ensuring that African Americans be given the rights they have today. This demonstrates how the restaging of this political dance still holds weight in our present world. In Obama’s address where “Bloody Sunday” occurred *the New York Times* article states, “Mr. Obama rejected the notion that race relations have not improved since then [the 1960s], despite the string of police shootings that have provoked demonstrations. ‘What happened in Ferguson may not be unique,’ he said, ‘but it’s no longer endemic. It’s no longer sanctioned by law or custom, and before the civil rights movement, it most surely was.’”^{lvii} American society has come a long way in 50 years and yet the power of restaging this political dance still holds precedence in today’s world with the race issues that have percolated recently— such as the incidents in Ferguson, the incidences that occurred in Baltimore, and incidences that continue to percolate surrounding the matter of race in our country.

Those who participated and witnessed this dance on March 7, 2015 were reminded of political issues of the past and present. If movements had not occurred those 50 years ago and those in power had not been influenced by an assemblage of bodies banding and dancing together, I would speculate that the world in which we live would be a much grimmer one. What the rights of humankind— especially in the United States of America— have achieved through these movements, or dances, is

extraordinary. People coming together and moving has changed the way in which we, American citizens, think about our politics and has changed the way in which we think about our lives as citizens in the United States of America.

Descriptions, perceptions, documentation, and even criticism— from BBC News, *the New York Times*, and beyond—concerning these events, make the restaging of this dance come alive to those who could not be there, in physical form, to witness it or participate in it. Criticism holds value even when the criticism is in a positive light. I wish to shed, from the patterning of my brain that criticism has to be a negative response to art. In this particular instance, it would be rare to find an article that would negatively criticize this dance due to the sensitivity of the Civil Rights Movement; however, this does not make it any less valuable. From these articles, it is evident that this political dance accomplished its goal of making people think about their actions in present day and the political climate of present time, due to what has already occurred in America's past.

KRUMPING

Krumping is a relatively new dance form which is a derivative of hip hop, emerging out of Los Angeles, California. The dance form of krumping is a vigorous bombastic form that some onlookers might witness with intimidation and misunderstanding, but until one delves further into the context of what is really occurring does one realize how this form subverts violence even though this movement can still elicit the idea of intimidation, “Krumping—also known as “clown

dancing”—was developed in Los Angeles to provide an outlet and to divert youths from gangs and violence.”^{lviii} One of krumping’s functions was to divert youths from participating in violence—particularly in this case being associated with the gangs in Los Angeles, California. An example of a misinterpretation of this dance form is, “To the uninitiated, especially cops, it looked like street fighting. Legend has it New York City policemen were about to arrest a group of young guys for violent behavior until they explained they were “just dancing” and proceeded to demonstrate each dance move to the cops.”^{lix}

Krumping has morphed from the catharsis of the streets to the competition circuit and virtuosity world of the media, but certain movement elements continue to ring true. While witnessing krumping—specifically at the 2013 EBS Krump World Championship—I noticed that it is compiled of body isolations, thrashing limbs, throwing bound flow arms, jumping in a vigorous motion, accenting “the down” on the down beat, fast torso circles, and what is known as “clowning”.^{lx} “Clowning” is “GOOFING” on something or someone attempting to make a mockery of them; however, the krumpers continue to keep their cool.^[xxiv] Krumping, especially in a competition setting, can take on a desired “aesthetic of cool”; however, it is not the same “cool” aesthetic in European terms,

Dixon-Gottschild further elaborates on the “aesthetic of the cool” and differentiates on the aesthetic and differentiates it from Europeanist valued aesthetic elements in this way: The aloofness, sangfroid, and detachment of some styles of European academic dance are completely different from this aesthetic of cool. The European attitude suggests centeredness, control, linearity, directness; the Africanist mode suggests asymmetrically (that plays with falling off center), looseness (implying flexibility and vitality), and in indirectness of approach...^{lxi}

In terms of the movement definition of krumping, there is a lot of power and force behind each individual movement. It manifests itself in ascending order from the bottom of the body upward which gives it a sense of “grounded-ness”. Another notable attribute is the thrashing and throwing of limbs which could seriously injure a person who got in the pathway of a krumper; although this dance form was created as a diversion from violence, it is important to address its bombastic and explosive nature.

Before all of the media coverage, krumping served as a release of aggression and emotion which took on a spiritual nature without being directly threatening toward another body or bodies. It is and was a tool utilized to release pent up feelings. According to Christina Zanfagna, “...young krumpers are both protected and permitted to release aggression through fierce competitive dance. Although there may be victors and losers, there does not necessarily have to be destruction.”^{lxii} As Zanfagna states, it is a safe space created by the surrounding bodies where it is allowed to let go and explode in a conglomerate of emotions.

“By confining krumping to (ghetto) urban space, he [LaChapelle one of the first krumpers] feeds into a kind of segregation that black people have experienced historically and continue to experience even today around space.”^{lxiii} This quote carries immense importance because it further supports the significance of bodies occupying and creating safe peaceful spaces otherwise not granted to them. Additionally, krumping has a more universal element of spirituality by tapping into deep emotions that one’s day to day life may not have the outlet at home, at school, in the streets, or

even in their neighborhoods, “Krumping as an embodied Africanist aesthetic practice, functions uniquely in different contexts for different purposes. Originators of the style, and current practitioners of the style in the America and around the globe... where dancers were able to work through difficult emotions of anger and pain in the dance circle.”^{lxiv}

During the time of American slavery, ring shouts were religious rituals in which the participants moved in a circle shuffling their feet and clapping their hands creating a space for expression and worship.^{lxv} The dance form of krumping fosters a similar purpose by creating a circle to liberate and provide an outlet for the oppressed in order to express themselves. The following quote addresses the link between the ring shouts and krumping, “As a locus of spirit possession – as a ring shout styled event— krumping is a religious ritual... There are no limits—inside the circle.”^{lxvi} Ring shouts were one of the few places where the enslaved felt free as discussed above due to the space they created through the circle. Dragon, one of the original krumpers goes on to state, “Krump is a state of being, a mindset of no boundaries, no lines, no limitations, just to be free.”^{lxvii} Dragon’s words also feel reminiscent of American slavery when they would sing and dance to escape life. That freedom and liberation greatly correlates to modern day krumping. People are not always granted their own space so they have to create it and some choose to do so through the formation of a circle.

Dancers who engage in Krumping are not supposed to come into physical contact with one another and those circled around them know not to interrupt or

invade the pathways of a performer/dancer, especially when a krumper is taking a turn in the circle. Krumping is an example of embodying peace and the separate paths of its performers exemplify this. This form does not [1.] Biologically incapacitate others or [2.] Reduce anyone's action-space. There is an unwritten code in the Africanist dance traditions— such as elements of contrariety, polyrhythm, high-affect juxtaposition and ephemerism^{lxviii}— that have seeped their way into the hip hop world. It is understood that a person, or persons, does not interrupt a person's time or space when it is their turn to dance— thus not impeding on their action space, but creating more space for more bodies through the inclusion of the circle. Krumping is non-violent and is embodying peace through the use of the body as an active vehicle of free expression, “Like krumping, it is a journey that is undertaken with a deep spiritual and political commitment to unearthing the revolutionary potential of democratic education and developing alternatives to violence.”^{lxix}

Moving from the streets to the stage, in the piece of more conventional choreography entitled, *Buckworld One* takes the dance form of krumping and places it on a prescenum stage immediately changing the context of the form. In the corresponding article to *Buckworld One*, the nature of the krumping movement utilized is described as, “Control falling off balance and recovering, kinesthetically spoke to the disorienting nature of battle and war.”^{lxx} *Buckworld One* was designed to incite change to spark revolution as previously stated in the Prologue. So it seems fitting that an element of revolution in dance of fall and recovery, courtesy of Doris Humphrey, would be incorporated into this peaceful protest on stage as well.

Overall even with its explosive, bombastic, and at times misunderstood nature, “Krumping has effected change on spiritual, economic, artistic and social levels. The film *Rize* provides a testament to a community- prescribed pedagogy for social justice where krumping and clowning act as alternatives to gang activity, a means for bonding a community, a place of spiritual expression and an art form in which productively channel aggression about absent fathers and mothers and poverty.”^{lxxi} Peaceful embodiment does not have to manifest itself in one manner being serene, calm, and keeping an eighteenth century “aesthetic of cool” as American children are taught in elementary school. Krumping proves that such embodiment can be bombastic, explosive, rigorous, and loud while providing a safe space in the circle.

3

REVOLUTION

FROM THE CONCRETE STREETS TO THE PROSCENIUM STAGE

What causes change? What causes we as people to feel an impetus for change or to cause change? In human anatomy, biological catalysts create chemical reactions in the body that help us function on a micro level. While on a macro level, certain events can catalyze our bodies to become vehicles for change.

Modern dance was a revolution of the moving body itself. It made room for more possibilities in the dance world, contrary to the opposed restrictions imposed by classical ballet— frontal facings, pictorial shapes, staying on the vertical, virtuosity, and western hierarchy.^{lxxii} Doris Humphrey is known as an American modern dance pioneer. Humphrey craved a deeper meaning in understanding the movement possibilities of the human body and the various modes of expressiveness that it could project.^{lxxiii} She generated dance vocabulary, based on the physics principle of gravity, through the human body operating within a fall and its recovery.^{lxxiv} In her written work, “My Approach to Modern Dance” The mother of fall and recovery, in modern dance, explained her thoughts about falling:

Falling and recovering is the very stuff of movements, the constant flux which is going on in every living body in all its tiniest parts, all the time. Nor is this all, for the process has a psychological meaning as well. I recognize these emotional overtones very early and instinctively responded very strongly to the exciting danger of the fall, and the repose and peace of recovery.^{lxxv}

In this text, Humphrey is discussing a specific action which she performed in her modern dance technique that completely dismantled the vertical of ballet. This action being fall and recovery completely took the body off of vertical to a horizontal plane. She also relates her movement technique on a greater scale to the ebb and flow of life, "... is the very stuff of movements, the constant flux which is going on in every living body in all its tiniest parts, all the time..."^{lxxvi} Through Humphrey's words, she proves how bodies can make meaning and how actions can make meaning. She depicts how harnessing the forces of physics and utilizing said forces can be exhilarating in the fall then peaceful in the resolve of the recovery.

Additionally, on the same note as Doris Humphrey, "Bodies on the Line: Contact Improvisation and Techniques of Nonviolent Protest" Danielle Goldman discusses how Humphrey had an interest in the risk of the act of falling. In particular her technique of the fall was yielding and sub-missing; however, the mastery comes from the recovery of the fall. Humphrey's choreography, along with the studying of her technique, demonstrated the exhilarating sensation experienced through the act of falling and addresses the tactics in this technique required to have a successful fall.^{lxxvii} Through her codified movement practices, she was able to choreograph moving bodies by harnessing the power of physics, by utilizing gravity and centripetal force, to develop a safe mode of falling by going in and out of the floor.

Even though falling was revolutionary when second generation modern dance emerged in the studio and on the stage — by going against the hierarchy of the vertical that ballet had imposed for so long— the art of falling is not strictly circumscribed to

the revolution of concert dance. In actuality, similar descriptions of such prescribed falling tend to strongly parallel workshops conducted and manuals written during the Civil Rights Movement, trying to spark a revolution, such as the movement descriptions from A Manual for Direct Action: Strategy and Tactics for Civil Rights and All Other Nonviolent Protest Movements.

Barbara Browning stated in her work, “Choreographing Postcoloniality: Reflections on the Passing of Edward said that, “Nonviolent noncooperation requires a technique of the body which in many ways resembles what contemporary choreographers refer to as “release technique”—but in the charged context of civil disobediences, the movement technique has intense political as well as spiritual ramifications.”^{lxxviii} Through Browning’s statement, she drives home the notion that embodied actions such as those which occurred during the American Civil Rights Movement evolved from the same principles as the ones put into place through modern dance choreographic tactics and techniques. These embodied actions also utilized the same elements of contact improvisation found in modern dance technique.

The book A Manual for Direct Action is a guide written in 1965 by Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey pertaining to peaceful tactics for revolution. This codified handbook provides a strong baseline for non-violent direct action during the Civil Rights Movement. It is essentially a guide that describes particular embodiments and ideal modes of physicality for particular scenarios during peaceful protests. An excerpt from the handbook states:

... [falling] is intended to protect the most vital parts of the body, through adopting a crouching position with hands over the head and ears, while lying

on the ground. If a buddy is undergoing severe attack, and is on the ground, it is often wise to lace yourself between the attackers and the victim by means of falling over the victim, face down, approximating the position of a person doing a “push-up” on the “up” part, but keeping your face down and tucked into your chest.^{lxxix}

This clearly prescribed technique and practice was codified among groups during the Civil Rights movements with a clear vivid description of how to embody a particular fall. Therefore, at that time these movement techniques were practiced in workshops to spread this knowledge by a particular organization called CORE, The Congress of Racial Equality.

In carrying out its objective of desegregating buses on interstate highways CORE had a goal, in the 1960’s, of enacting nonviolent protests.^{lxxx} CORE established workshops for those interested in rising up during the time of the Civil Rights Movement. These workshops provided training for mental as well as specific physical preparedness. Danielle Goldman writes about CORE stating, “Each step was meticulously planned executed, and evaluated, with an eye toward isolating behavior and control in response.”^{lxxxi} The key to peaceful protestors’ training was to possess the techniques required for modes of embodiment and contact for a variety of scenarios without dissolving the peaceful intention— even with an action seeming as simple and mundane as falling.

The context of the contact and movement between bodies during the preparation and performance of acts during the Civil Rights Movement could still be deemed quite different from what would be entailed in a studio setting or a contact improvisation jam; however, the principles of bodies connecting in space, guiding, and

influencing each other safely in and out of the floor (fall and recovery) and protecting each other from injury seem to directly correlate to the political form in the streets: during marches, during sit ins, and even during Freedom Rides. One could argue that Johan Galtung's particular category of violence, "Violence as a reduction of action-space"^{lxxxii} could be defined as someone encroaching or making contact with another person's space thus eliminating their options and choices for action. I am now potentially contradicting myself because I am discoursing that there was training around contact improvisation encouraging people to invade others' personal space. Frankly I am not. The difference being that this training was used in the event that an active body was knocked down from its action space, already having been impeded upon. Similar techniques to contact improvisation utilized by CORE were to position safety nets in place for its members to be able to help each other, when reductions of action-space and biological incapacitation occurred.

Which leads me back to the questions of: What causes change? What causes us we, as people, to feel an impetus for change or to cause change? Certain events can catalyze bodies to be vehicles for change.

What is it about revolution that engages some as participants and others as observers? In the book *Rethinking Revolution*, Bruce Ackerman states "Revolution: the word has become one of the banalities of the late twentieth century. We have seen the story unfold so many times before; excited crowds, vague slogans, and charismatic leaders flicker on our television screens in a familiar sort of heroic (melo)drama. But surely we can think about it afresh. What makes revolution so engaging?"^{lxxxiii} Is it the

break from constructed norms? Or perhaps the fact that the sight of people banding together in a community based manner— which arguably does not occur as frequently as it did in the past, due to technology isolating us, as we witness more people walking around with their noses in their phones rather than engaging with the world at large— incites and motivates individuals to action.

How does one even begin to define revolution? Ackerman states that “To put the definition in a single line: [it would be] A revolution is a successful effort to transform the governing principles and practices of a basic aspect of life through an act of collective and self-conscious mobilization.”^{lxxxiv} A phrase that particularly stands out in this text is “*an act of collective and self-conscious mobilization.*” In these terms, revolution directly correlates to the consciously acting body, easily translated to specifically embodied body. Also in this definition, it states that revolution is a “successful effort” not just the bubbling of events towards a revolution, but when the water boils over and actually causes change in the system in place. That is revolution. Presently our country is in a time of stirring: thoughts stirring, people stirring, and agendas stirring. If active bodies continue this stirring to mobilize themselves to occupy space in an organized, tactful, and peaceful manner revolution is possible for our country once again. On an individual level, how do people gain ground on revolution? What can a single person’s trajectory be?

MOVEMENT VALUES

Growing up wearing pink frilly dresses, playing with assorted dolls, and using every color of nail polish known to humankind were activities rarely considered in my household, during my childhood, with my rough and tumble three older brothers. Instead, stepping into my home two decades ago, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Star Wars* action figures would have covered the den floor and the most recent episode of *Dragon Ball Z* would have been zooming across the television screen. My three older brothers, Tim, Brian, and Thomas, challenged me mentally and physically whether it was a trivia game or wrestling. I have come to the realization now that their imprint of physicality and the amplified morals from the fiction that they shared with me has remained evident in my psyche. These interests that they had shared with me, as younger versions of themselves, continue to show-up through my movement: interests, values, and principles as a dance artist. Due to my brothers' initial influence, I have been a lover of fiction and art. This deep passion has remained intact not because these mediums create an escape fabricating a world that does not exist but because, in a magnificent manner, they demonstrate the immense power that all of us possess deep within. These notions are similar to what I wish to portray through my choreography of just how powerful human beings are and can be. In essence, fiction and art amplify reality and places their magnificence at the general public's fingertips in an accessible manner.

One of my favorite fictional shows on television, during the past seven years, has been *The Walking Dead*. On this show—based on a series of fictitious graphic novels—a disease outbreak occurs in the United States causing all higher functions of the brain to cease and for the primordial brainstem to take over. In laymen’s terms this disease creates “zombie-ism.” It is especially compelling due to the fact that the title of the show, *The Walking Dead*, actually refers to the human survivors not the ravenous zombies. It is the living beings who, in essence, are the “walking dead” as a result of the premise that there is nothing left to live for. This is a sentiment in which I believe many people feel and experience throughout their lives at varying times.

People are often baffled as to why I place such immense value on this show and how it relates to my field of study. All they see is the superficial gore and violence, but I appreciate this television show because of how it relates back to Luke Skywalker’s—the protagonist of *STAR WARS*—action figure lying on my den floor. Characters such as he amplifies the greatness we as human beings possess. *The Walking Dead* more specifically personifies a frightening reality for us all; a world where our chaotic life paths rapidly circulate around each other without ever meeting to find some form of harmony, common ground, or unison. Abstract concepts such as these were explored by myself and my dancers on a physical level in my MFA thesis choreography through the use of bodily space, pathways, and synchronization.

The zombie infection will not take place in our present world; however, the elements of depleting natural resources, environmental degradation on various levels, racism, misunderstanding, and countries in turmoil are volatile occurrences which

could lead our world into a chaotic state similar to what this fictional show depicts. Ironically, the reasons why I truly adore *The Walking Dead* are because of the humanity, resilience, and power that result from the horror. As a viewer, I witness the show's characters living in fear and becoming submerged in the most desperate and hopeless of situations, while simultaneously seeing them find the strength to band together keeping hope alive in order to survive this toxic existence they are trapped in. In testing the characters' humanity, viewers witness two recurring outcomes, resulting in them either rising up as better forms of themselves or simply crumbling and falling apart.

With all of that said, my passion for art and fiction which was bestowed upon me by my brothers has directly influenced my movement values and the life principles I wish to portray in the work I create.

Life is effortful. The dances I make are effortful. My goal is that through kinesthetic empathy those who witness my choreography can be inspired—or at least curious—about the capabilities which we all have as human beings. Through my bombastic rigorous choreography—interwoven with text and pop culture—I present human beings executing amazing feats, not effortless ones—unlike classical ballet. I aim to amplify the hardship of the messy life experiences that everyone faces at different times, from personal hardships to ones on a societal level.

I value movement that is rigorous and effortful. Effort alongside my choreography's characteristics of athletic, serpentine, angular vs. amorphous, gestural, syncopated, and polyrhythmic brings a certain texture and juxtaposition to my

aesthetic. At times the controlled chaos of my choreography— through my interest in multiple bodies traveling in various complex pathways through space around each other—may approach a sense of over stimulation to its viewers; however, my value in minimal gesture and unison versus movements of a larger kinesphere² and rigor brings a needed palate cleanser to the dances that I create.

Due to my movement values and my research, interests in peaceful embodiment and peaceful protest in March of 2016, I was concerned that the two facets would not align and that I would have to make an extremely minimal dance. Minimalism is an aspect of dance which I see great value in; however, I tend not to make entire works of minimalism. It is important to acknowledge that small gestures do play a major role in my choreography as well; however, I did not wish to abandon my own choreographic values of rigor and physicality due to my other research interests. It was during this time that I revisited the history of the previously discussed dance form of krumping— a vigorous bombastic dance form that still embodies peace through subverting violence thus supporting my movement values.

How could I create a work that I was interested in, that felt like protest, and yet still possessed the movement values I hold dear in concert dance performance? This relatively new dance form-- derivative of hip hop--emerged out of Los Angeles.^{lxxxv} It regained knowledge, about an unlikely form of peaceful embodiment, and gave me a stake in experimenting with the movement I am interested in generating, as an artist. From there I was able to play with a sliding scale of how bombastic thrashing

² Kinesphere, being the amount of space one's body occupies in reference to their own body i.e. how small or large one can make one's self.

movement could still be peaceful embodiment –dependent on the context and on Johan Galtung’s previous definition of violence.

Researching the dance form of krumping, as well as reading Johan Galtung’s work, “On the Meaning of Nonviolence”, made me realize that I could investigate and support my thesis—that peaceful embodiment is not merely serene in nature, as we tend to think of it, or how civil disobedience has been taught to us as children in a singular manner— but in fact peaceful embodiment can exist on a spectrum and on that spectrum is where qualities of being loud and bombastic can coexist with serene and tranquil qualities and this notion is exactly what I was researching and exploring in my choreographic thesis work.

The previous analysis of the actions of sitting, standing, marching and krumping has aided in the dissection of how bodies can be mobilized to embody peace and as previously stated, with any action, our bodies can work in harmony to achieve the goal of the movement at hand and together several bodies can operate in concert to achieve the goal of creating a movement which can generate a societal change, thus making its mark on history. As stated in Newton’s Third law for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. These notions are what I strived to put forth in my MFA thesis choreography *I Pledge All(~~eg~~)iance*.

MOVEMENTS OF MY CHOREOGRAPHIC THESIS

I PLEDGE ALL(~~EG~~)IANCE

This past year, during my choreographic thesis process, was the first time that I actually attempted to explore research questions through my choreography to then have that embodied research inform my theoretical writing. Currently, through my research, I have been engaging with the notion of the possible modes of peaceful embodiment in the choreography of protest from the world at large to the concert stage.

As previously discussed, in the past peaceful protest was portrayed singularly only being performed in a serene and tranquil manor. Since then it has been engrained in my mind that embodying peace is required to be minimal movement such as marching (during marches) or being still sitting or standing (during sit/stand-ins). My research in krumping has challenged this former notion of the singular possibility for peaceful embodiment and supported that explosive, athletic, and larger movement that I value in my own choreography and how it too can be placed on a spectrum of peaceful embodiment.

To begin tackling this task, I wanted to create a dance in stages. I wanted to lay out a flexible structure that could directly correlate to my written research to follow. I knew potential sections, or chapters, in my written thesis would most likely include:

Sitting, Marching, Standing, and Krumping; therefore, I planned to create a dance with four sections based on the principles of each of these peacefully embodied actions.

I. TRUDGING

Interestingly enough, I did not create my dance in the order that it ended up being presented in. I actually started with the middle two sections then I went back to the beginning, and finally completed part IV. I originally wanted this section to be the dancers' "sitting" section; however, I found it more effective and more accessible for me as a choreographer to create it with them lying on the ground. Due to my interest in accessibility, I have utilized text from popular culture, to give the non-dancer an inroad to the context of the work, especially with the volatile climate that our country is currently undergoing. For the first two minutes of my dance work, the audience was alone in darkness except for the sounds and the words of the prologue soundtrack. Words such as "keeping alive", "priorities", "dismantle", "cry", "shoot somebody", and many others were in this soundscape that flooded the performance space. Recognizable voices such as Donald Trump, our current President, Hilary Clinton, and Alicia Garza co-founder of Black Lives Matter. Additionally, sounds such as bombs going off, angry mobs, laughing people, troops marching, children questioning, politicians talking, and radio static were also in this prologue. Due to the heavy nature of the research I have invested in over the past three years, I needed a way to contextualize the space for the audience. I crafted the soundscore to build-up some sense of tension to get audience members to lean in a little extra. There is something

powerful about stripping away one of the human senses, such as sight, in a performance setting to make the audience merely listen.

As the lights slowly faded up, the audience witnessed a sea of still bodies lying on the floor as if they were viewing an aftermath of a horrific occurrence. These still bodies took on the embodiment of those who participated in sit-ins at various lunch counters during the Civil Rights movement, in the sense that they were still claiming their space and not moving until they had the impetus to move. This notion of embodying stillness trying to imagine what it would be like at a sit-in in the 1950s and 1960s could only be a launching pad for us. We could never truly know what the bodies of that time were thinking and feeling or even their life histories building up to said moment in time; therefore, during my choreographic processes the intentionality and movement started to abstract and take on lives of their own.

Ten still bodies lay on the floor, one voice speaks out having text cascade over them. This one voice multiplies into many having varying orders of spoken words being “rise” and “up” or “up” and “rise”. A series of slippery sliding movements occurred while the bodies remained in contact with the floor, on the low level, with the variety of bodies moving at different times. Solos and cannons (movement material that is the same but instead of unison each dancer may start the movement two counts behind the dancer ahead of them) occur having bodies merge into the middle of a unison phrase while others returned back to stillness. Eventually, all ten of my dancers performed a floor phrase in unison to then have it deconstruct again. The unison body can represent a united body. All ten of them were not ready to stand up off the floor

just yet. Only six of the dancers started getting up, motivated by the spoken text of “rise up” and “up rise”, while the remaining four remained laying on the floor unable to rise. The title of this section ended up being “Trudging” instead of “Sitting” due to the fact that when we were finished crafting it they looked like bodies who had just carried an abundance of weight—literally and metaphorically—who had just dealt with something horrific, and all of the movement they could muster was to trudge along the trenches staying low. In retrospect this section is reminiscent of the “Health Care Die-In” protests that occurred in May 2017 with people protesting by lying down.

II. MARCHING

In section *II. Marching*—a sextet consisting of five females and one male being black and white³, the basis of my movement research for this section originated from the exploration of exactly how two-dimensional human bodies can be presented in our three-dimensional world. I displayed these bodies in close proximity making angular pathways in the space through the vehicle of an abstract “march” through a plié phrase reminiscent of sitting, standing, and marching similar to protest marches traveling forward through space. In the first two minutes of this section the dancers performed their marching movement material in close proximity appearing unified, but were not

³ I use the terms “black” and “white” with much thought. Due to the fact that not all of my dancers are in fact African American, I would not want to address them that way. They come from areas of Jamaica, the Caribbean, as well as possessing mixed blood. Also not all of my white dancers come from purely European descent which is what the word Caucasian implies; therefore, I feel that saying black and white feels more inclusive and important for me to say especially within the context of my research.

perfectly uniform. I wanted the dancers to appear to have a sense of togetherness; however, I did not want them to have an overwhelming sense of conformity—even though the opening movement definitely could be perceived as being militaristic. The dancers in their clump traveled along an upstage diagonal. During this traveling pass, I was interested in the pathways of each individual dancer. Due to this objective, during these pathways there were quick 180 degree flips crafted in the directions that some of dancers performed in at the same time, while other instances everyone went at varying timings. During some of these said flips, their feet remained planted in the same spatial orientation to one another on the floor; and others steps were taken to reorient. This was done in order to quickly change direction taking the audience from one profile view of the body to another. Through the realization of the dancers' pathways, I became interested in shaping the space of the room, or architecting its space, in which the dance was performed, and shaping the space of each dancer's own kinesphere— i.e. how much or how little space each of their bodies could occupy.

In The Manual for Direct Action during protests, protesters were trained to perform in a small kinesphere in the fetal position if they were brought to the ground while being attacked. In another scenario they were trained to take on a larger kinesphere if they were trying to free a person from someone else's grasp by falling through a plank position.^{lxxxvi} I accomplished the task— of my dancers performing varying kinespheres— by having them experiment with how far they could push to the extent of their own kinespheres in short movement phrases. As a cast, we wanted to see if gestures in a small kinesphere could still have a big impact. The large kinesphere

movements were utilized to explode out of the accumulating marching sequence on the diagonal. This then was executed through the outstretched arcing of their arms to the spreading of a jump that resembles a floating “T” shape, as well as the spoking⁴ and arcing of their legs to move their bodies in and out of the low level. The small kinesphere movements were executed by the gesture of their hands to their foreheads, possibly resembling a salute. Their hands creating an arch shape over their shoulders, and even the slight change in the orientation of their spines shifting 15 degrees off vertical with their focus going over the subsequent shoulder changed their overall body attitude.

As previously stated, I did not create my four sections in order. This section was first created in a graduate composition class. Due to the fact that it manifested itself in a classroom setting, as an assignment, made it originally out of context to my thesis research. In a choreographic synopsis I wrote after I reflected, that even though I did not set out to make this relate to my thesis research, my interests seemed to seep their way in regardless through my utilization of gesture that brings up certain militant or unified images. Having unison represent unity and togetherness. Therefore, through investigating all of this movement research, this section morphed into a conglomerate of people performing unison movement material, breaking away from the group through the use of a clump image, and returning. The breakaway is usually attended to with a chug on one leg and with the arm circling in the sagittal plane from front to back. The breakaway moments in this dance tend to lead to phrase work being in the

⁴ Laban Movement Analysis term meaning an extremity making a direct line from the midline to the periphery.

same vein of the 180 degree flip, but with more extension in the limbs and jumps developed more so from my initial movement generation. As I transitioned this project from my Graduate Composition II class to a section of my thesis, the movement slowly morphed out of this ridged militant flipping into larger movements embodied with a lucid spine on multiple planes of motion rather than merely the frontal plane while still maintaining an angular spatially specific nature.

My interest in body politics through the vehicle of exploring the spectrum of what peaceful embodiment can be definitely reared its head in this section. Through my interest in two-dimensionality, this dance has transformed into how unison can facilitate power in numbers and how bodies moving together make meaning and create a powerful image to viewers and to the bodies performing the unison, which is how this section began and ended. During *II. Marching* there are still four dancers lying on the floor remaining from section one. Once the group of unison dancers resolves Megan Burgess, Junior BFA, starts to repeat a solo that she had performed in section one. In terms of cause and effect the group of unison bodies could be perceived as if they catalyzed her to stand up as well as the ticking clock of the soundscore to motivate her in terms of time running out.

III. (WITH)STANDING

As this section title dictates, part three of my choreographic thesis was mainly focused on the dancers getting up to a vertical standing position similar to Turkey's

Standing Man Erdem Gunduz. Adversely, these four women were not getting off the floor to protest the Turkish government but the mere act of standing after having been seen lying down like tattered ragdolls, for so long, has an impact of its own.

During this particular process, I was interested in rising and falling, similar to Doris Humphrey's modern dance technique. Through our process of creating this section, I created phrase material that I taught to my dancers, and then together we came up with ways to make it more challenging and we discussed possible ways to demonstrate how repeated movement can become different with different intentionality. We discoursed about what factors of life made us rise and what factors made us fall. They could be as abstract or as literal as they wanted when making their lists. As the process grew more in-depth, we were able to pinpoint specific intentionality to particular movements.

In the first half of *III. (with)Standing*, Burgess stood up performing her solo, but fell back down again. Three out of the four women, three white women and one black woman, remained on the floor performing the sliding motif from the *I. Trudging* section. From there, the remaining three women got up and started dancing predominantly on the vertical, performing movements with a large kinesphere having high legs, one-handed inversions, and quick level changes. I created robust movement for this initial trio to perform because it needed to be challenging every time they ran it. To make it more rigorous, we found places to find abrupt falls in this material. In the first half of this section, barely making it through the movement material purposefully, they kept abruptly falling down demonstrating how the act of standing

up and staying up is an extremely challenging feat. Sprinkled throughout the first half these three white women made a standing pose with gestures reminiscent of II. Marching. These gestures were: saluting hand on forehead and hand arched on shoulder. All of a sudden they all fall and Jasmine Equilin, a Sophomore BFA black woman, stands up for the first time in the entire piece. She performs a robust solo of thrashing limbs, having a large kinesphere, fast movements, large leg swipes, and quick level changes, reminiscent of krumping's elements; although, it is crucial to know that I would never label her solo as being that dance form. Burgess, the original soloist, abruptly stands back up. They merely pause and stare at each other letting tension build when finally Burgess decides to follow Esquilin dancing. This action catalyzed the other two women to rise backup to a standing position once again.

The second half of this section was identical movement material performed in a new manner with different intentionality and coaching behind it. They had a new person in the mix making it a quartet and they all had finally arrived to standing. All of the abrupt falls were cut out of the choreography and they were allowed to see each other finding a sense of comradery. Also, Esquilin got to participate more in the second half. Having these elements change enabled them to become a ferocious powerful cohort of women who were so exhausted with what they had been through now possessed more fire, unity, and seemingly purpose to carry them through the next section.

IV. RISING

“In the development of this work [Buckworld One] Carrie Mikuls developed and choreographed sections that fused krump’s Africanist aesthetics with modern and theatricized expression, while allowing spaces within the choreography where the krumpers could improvise. This element of responsive energy kept the energy of the show heightened.”^{lxxxvii} Taking elements of krump, out of context and putting them on a concert stage, fusing them with modern dance elements such as what Mikuls achieved is similar to what I did in section IV but I would never call that krump dancing; however, there are characteristics shared between the two.

Section *IV. Rising* brought all ten of my dancers back together. There were complex pathways being created all over the three-sided performance space. Movement that had already been performed was being revisited with new movement added in. The first half was a conglomerate of different movements being performed simultaneously creating an over stimulating environment—matching the growing stimulus of the soundscore of various texts overlapping and the increasing intensity of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs’ song “Heads Will Roll”. This section felt reminiscent of the overstimulation that social media has had during our past year’s political climate—having it deconstruct with different pathways being revealed in a clear manner. This section did not pitter out in a sense of having a climax then calming down. It stayed at an intense pace and remained there. My dancers were swirling around one another rigorously to all of a sudden miraculously end up in a clump performing unison

movement together. They then performed new movement material on different complex pathways to find themselves in unison once again in an equidistant spaced manner. This section is chaotic, but I feel and felt as if times of change can be.

Toward the end of our process, my dancers and I realized that their stirring bodies in space represented all of the stirring bodies in our country having their own agendas, causes, and lives with their various paths co-existing with one another. Similar to principles of space in my dance, eventually some groups of people find common ground in the world and those swirling pathways find an endpoint of unison and bodies rising up for what they believe in coming together for change.

Life is and will always be effortful. I see the beauty in revealed effort and struggle especially when one rises from it. Through my physically rigorous choreography, I aim to demonstrate incredible feats being executed by human beings, not effortless ones. Humanity has the ability to fall and rise in a grand manner and I strive to confront audiences with this notion. It is my hope that through kinesthetic empathy viewers fall into inspiration and curiosity about the perceptible capabilities which we all have as human beings. My choreographic research interests will continue to bleed into my written ones.

INTERSECTIONS OF MOVEMENT FORMS

The movements of sitting, marching, standing, krumping, and how they fit into my choreographic thesis are actions that do not seem related; however, this is not necessarily the case. Even though they are different and can be utilized in varying

manners they are all modes of embodying peace. Galtung's definition is the key that threads them all together. All of these actions are peaceful embodiment because none of these modes of movement possess violence in terms of these categories:

1. Violence as biological incapacitation
2. Violence as reduction of action-space.^{lxxxviii}

There is a misconception held previously by myself, the media, and the general public that peace solely correlates to the tranquil nature of being calm, quiet, and potentially even an 18th century “aesthetic of cool” but peaceful embodiment is not limited to this completely tranquil genre of behavior. Peaceful embodiment can take on the form of the standing man's serene in road to civil disobedience that has been more familiar to society, but it is important to acknowledge that it can manifest itself in the opposite end of the spectrum as well. The movement mode of krumping which takes on more bombastic and explosive modes of movement, being reminiscent of section *IV. Rising* in my thesis, successfully achieves peaceful embodiment just as much as the standing man's mode of peace does.

CONCLUSION

BODIES AS VEHICLES

Our bodies make meaning. Our bodies have purpose. Our bodies are vehicles. Our bodies can embody peace on a spectrum. As human beings, we do not merely exist in stationary form; we are constructed of hundreds of moving parts, born to move.^{lxxxix} Movement pertains to physical motion or the active decision to choose to be still in a particular manner. Either choice, in itself, has the capability to tell a story that can invoke emotion and result in a change of heart, as well as to demonstrate a series of actions, plans, or intentions which allow our bodies to work in harmony to achieve a particular goal.

Our current state of the world is struggling, but we must keep moving forward in a peaceful productive manner. We must get up from the rubble that we feel we are stuck under. We must aim to be the best possible versions of ourselves first and point fingers later. We must join together with others and form productive relations and communities. It takes one person, one voice, one vote, one march, one protest, one idea, one move(ment), and one stance which can invoke powerful change. Patrick Henry, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Erdem Gunduz, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are a few of the many people who society has glorified as historical icons, when in fact they started out as ordinary citizens who exemplified what individuals in a floundering society are capable of through a spectrum of peaceful embodiment. As these icons have, I too want to bring awareness, through my

choreography and writing. It is important to note that by the end of my dance it is not about the viewer understanding all of my researched choreography. Whether an audience member understands all my research nuances –exploring modes of peaceful embodiment—or not something that one can more tangibly understand is that by the end of the dance all of my dancers are doing incredible feats in unison, not uniform. The unison over perfect uniform part is important, because they are not identical bodies they are beautifully different bodies, but they are conquering the same robust task together. Whether it is subliminal or conscious thinking there is power in seeing different bodies literally rise up equally in a space together and tackling something nearly undoable.

We must have hope and we must keep creating art and writings to peacefully bring about this awareness to evoke big questions. We must understand in this crumbling world that we still possess the power to make it better and that we can become powerful moving vehicles for bettering our lives through embodying various modes of peace; modes that are quiet, serene and tranquil, but also modes that are loud, robust and bombastic.

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